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**MR. WU HONGBO**  
**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS,**

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**High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2016**

**Science-policy interface: New ideas, insights, and solutions**  
**Presentation of the Global sustainable Development Report 2016**

**New York, 12 July 2016, 3:00 pm**

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to take the floor to briefly present to you the Global Sustainable Development Report - the GSDR – 2016.

As you will recall, the GSDR responds to the mandate from the Rio+20 Conference to contribute to strengthening the science-policy interface for sustainable development in the context of the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF).

The preparation of the 2016 report involved an inclusive, multi-stakeholder process drawing upon scientific and technical expertise. 245 scientists and experts from within and outside the United Nations contributed to the report.

True to its mandate, the report is designed as an assessment of assessments. It endeavors to present a range of scientific perspectives and to be policy-relevant but not policy-prescriptive.

The report was prepared specifically to inform the discussions at the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2016.

The theme ‘ensuring that no one is left behind’ is a recurring thread in the report.

The first chapter asks what ‘ensuring that no one is left behind’ means in relation to the 2030 Agenda.

Other chapters of the report provide specific highlights on how the inclusiveness imperative may impact the delivery of the Agenda, through examining the nexus of infrastructure, inequality and resilience, as well as through the cross-cutting dimensions of technology and institutions.

As a critical dimension of the science-policy interface, the report also explores ways in which new and emerging issues identified by science could be screened and analyzed for the benefit of the HLPF.

I will not go through the details of the report. I invite you to consult the briefs that were distributed to you, which summarize the chapters of the report.

What I would like to do is to highlight selected messages from report, and reflect on what we have learned from the preparation of the first three reports that could inform the next phase of the GSDR.

*First, improving our understanding of the effectiveness of development strategies in leaving no one behind.*

Ensuring that no one is left behind is a fundamental guiding principle for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Science-Policy Interface can inform decision-making on four broad questions.

First, who are those being or at risk of being left behind?

Second, why are they left behind?

Third, how can strategies and policies reach them in practice?

And fourth, what types of strategies and policies would be appropriate in order to leave no one behind?

The report makes clear that many criteria are used in practice to identify those left behind, whether within a country or between countries.

It is important to take into account the dynamic nature of deprivation and inequality; in this respect, preventive policies are critical to ensure that new people or group do not fall behind at the same time as others escape poverty and deprivation.

In many areas, inclusive development strategies are the commonly accepted paradigm. However, whether strategies succeed in reaching those left behind depend on many factors, from country-specific circumstances, to their design, targeting methods and practical implementation.

Examples of interventions reviewed for the report that aim to reach the furthest behind first include:

- nutrition, where the core target of interventions in developing countries is those suffering the most from stunting;
- area-based interventions targeting the poorest locations; and
- strategies to provide shelter for homeless people.

A message comes across strongly from all the chapters of the report: if no one is to be left behind in 2030, the notion of inclusiveness cannot be treated as an afterthought.

Rather, it should be an integral part of institution design and functioning; of research and development, and of infrastructure planning and development.

*Second, adopting an integrated approach to sustainable development.*

Adopting an integrated approach to sustainable development has been recognized as a necessity for success in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

This year's report examines interlinkages between infrastructure, inequality and resilience. Among the possible interlinkages in the nexus, an extensive amount of scientific research was found on the links between infrastructure and inequality, as well as on how people's resilience is affected separately by infrastructure resilience and by inequality.

As in any nexus, harnessing synergies and addressing trade-offs is critical for policy-making. The research reviewed for the report emphasizes that a focus on both efficiency and equity is needed to harness the synergies between infrastructure, inequality and resilience.

*Third, mobilizing technology for the SDGs: scientists' perspectives.*

The report presents a range of perspectives of scientists on the role of technology for the achievement of the SDGs.

Technology is essential for achieving the SDGs and reaping the benefits of synergies among them, as well as for minimizing trade-offs among goals.

Scientists emphasized a need for national and international technology roadmaps. They also underlined the need for effective national science-policy interfaces; foresight and scenarios; facilitation of learning across communities, including underserved communities; and cluster analysis.

*Fourth, inclusive institutions for sustainable development.*

There is clear awareness that the understanding of institutions is critical for delivering on the imperative to leave no one behind.

It is important to assess both how inclusive institutions are, and whether and how they foster inclusiveness through their actions.

In this vein, the report explores two specific types of institutions: national councils for sustainable development (NCSDs) and national parliaments.

Research reviewed for the report suggests that, if provided with adequate resources, NCSDs can be effective mechanisms for stakeholder participation and engagement across the

whole policy cycle. As legislative bodies, parliaments will have a key role to play in ensuring that no one is left behind. The report focuses on the inclusion of four specific groups: women, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and children and youth.

Research reviewed for the report suggests that progress has been made with respect to the representation of these groups in national parliaments. However, gaps still exist. Similarly, while progress has been made in terms of codifying the rights of marginalized groups, there is still a long way to go in this respect.

*Fifth, Identifying emerging issues for the HLPF.*

The identification of new and emerging issues for the attention of policy makers is a critical function of the science-policy interface. It is also one of the functions of the HLPF.

The report demonstrates that a wide range of sources – document analysis, crowdsourcing, and expert meetings – can usefully be drawn on when identifying emerging issues for the HLPF.

It provides a simple framework for categorizing emerging issues, as well as criteria that could be considered to filter emerging issues down to a limited number for consideration of the HLPF.

The report concludes that the involvement of experts from multiple disciplines brings critical value added, including for prioritizing emerging issues and providing multi-dimensional analyses of the issues and their inter-connectedness.

Lastly, I would like to briefly examine the lessons we can draw from the preparation of three editions of the GSDR for the production of the report in the future.

As you know, Member States have decided that the GSDR will be prepared once every four years, for the meetings of the HLPF under the auspices of the General Assembly.

Member States have designed a three-tier mechanism for the preparation of the report, which comprises 15 eminent expert scientists to write the report, supported by a task team co-led by several parts of the UN system, and of course the scientific community.

In operationalizing this mechanism, it will be critical to mobilize the broadest possible range of scientific inputs from multiple disciplines.

The three editions of the GSDR have explored integrated approaches that focus on the interrelationships among areas of the SDGs seen as an indivisible system, and a balanced consideration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore once more the importance of preserving a window for the interaction between science and policy at the HLPF.

This was one of the ground breaking innovations from Rio+20. Science is needed more than ever to inform the implementation of the ambitious new Agenda.

In turn, science needs to be responsive to the questions that this new Agenda puts forward. There is need for dialogue, and the HLPF should remain a central platform for such dialogue.

I thank you.

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